Football Hall of Fame Western Australia

THE FAME GAME

(The official newsletter of the Football Hall of Fame Western Australia)

Issue 2 (Summer 2007)

BIG PUSH FOR A MUSEUM

The push for the establishment of a Football Museum to showcase Western Australia's rich history of the game — and provide a proper display to highlight the achievements of its many great players — has gathered considerable momentum.

A delegation of members of the Football Hall of Fame WA Committee — led by chairman Louis Prospero — met with the State Minister for Sport, John Kobelke, at his offices in Perth on December 20, 2006, in a bid to gain support for the venture.

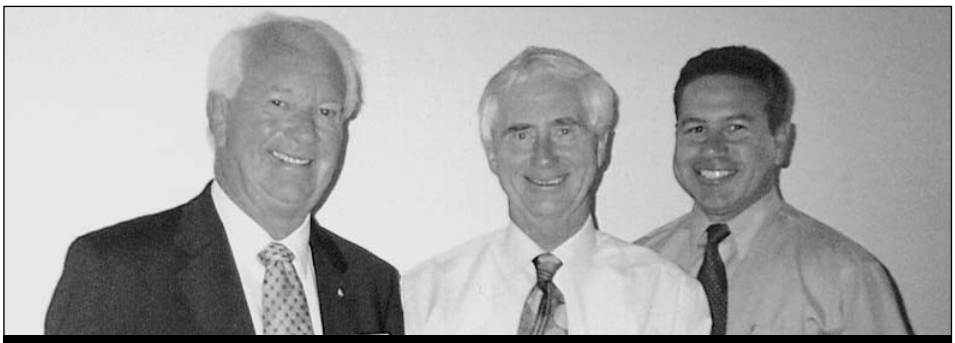
Another Labor MLC, Vincent Catania, the member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, met the Committee a few weeks earlier.

The chairman of Football West, Kevin Campbell, also attended both meetings to lend his considerable support to the Hall of Fame Committee.

Although no firm commitments regarding the setting up — or the site — of a potential Museum were guaranteed, the fact that the Hall of Fame Committee was able to lobby members of the State Government was an achievement in itself.

Committee member Richard Kreider put together a detailed video presentation on the history of the WA game and what a potential Football Museum would look like with lavish exhibitions.

After watching the presentation — and listening to pleas from other members of the Committee — Mr Kobelke said he did not doubt the passion the Committee held for the sport and for the proposed project.



BIG THREE: Kevin Campbell, John Kobelke, Louis Prospero

The Committee said that its preferred site for a Museum was space in Members Equity Stadium.

Mr Kobelke explained that no decisions regarding a possible Museum could be taken until the State Government's Task Force had concluded its report into major stadiums, which was expected to be some time in March.

"When we are able to move on a major rectangular stadium it's something to look at to see if we can fit you in," he said. "But we can't do anything until the report is finalised."

Kevin Campbell urged the Minister to consider that planning proposals for either the continuing development of Members Equity Stadium — or the possible erection of a new stadium — should include the provision for a Football Museum.

He said Football West fully supported the bid for such a concept.

Louis Prospero said: "We need to congratulate the State Government and the Minister for Sport in meeting with us and also Vincent Catania, who has made a commitment to see the project through.

"These are encouraging signs.

"I'd also like to thank Football West for their endorsement and financial support."

STARRY LINE-UP: Alistar Edwards, Tony Franken, Vincent Catania, Stan Lazaridis

A STAR-STUDDED PARADE

Tony Franken hot-footed it from London to join a star-studded parade of some of WA's greats at the Football Hall of Fame's 10th Anniversary Dinner on November 17, 2006.

He had flown in less than 24 hours earlier after fulfilling his duties as Goalkeeper Coach to the Socceroos in the friendly against Ghana at Loftus Road on November 14.

"I'm having problems keeping my eyes open, but it's an honour to be involved in the celebrations," said Tony, who was presented with a trophy to mark his achievement of making WA football history with his involvement in the 2006 World Cup finals.

Tony and Stan Lazaridis, who also attended the Anniversary function, were the first West Australian males to participate in the finals of a World Cup.

Alistair Edwards was also lauded on the night for his history-making effort of being the first WA coach to lead a women's team into a World Cup finals. He was coach of the Young Matildas side that took part in the Women's Under-20 World Cup finals in Russia.

The trio were presented with their trophies by State Government representative Vincent Catania, MLC for the Mining and Pastoral region and a former junior player himself with the Perth Soccer Club.

CAPPING A GREAT NIGHT

The Football Hall of Fame WA achieved another significant milestone for the State in front of a gathering of 200 at the 10th Anniversary Dinner in November.

On a night when many history-makers were honoured, the Football Federation Australia chose the occasion to make Cap presentations to several WA-based Socceroos.

Peter Friend, the Chief of Staff of the FFA, flew from Sydney to hand out the Caps, which commemorated the first 'A' appearances of the recipients.

It is part of the FFA's push to ensure that all players who made 'A' game appearances for Australia should receive Cap recognition for their achievements.

Hall of Fame chairman Louis Prospero said it was a feather in the cap of the WA organisation that the FFA should select the Anniversary event to make the presentations.

Those who received their Caps on the night were:

Ron Adair, Con Purser, Gary Marocchi, David Jones, Ray Ilott, Alistair Edwards, Scott Miller, Bobby Despotovski, Shaun Murphy, Jimmy Pearson and Ken Boden.

WA's most capped Socceroo, Stan Lazaridis, and Tony Franken, who received other awards on the night, had already received their Caps from Prime Minister John Howard at World Cup celebrations in Sydney earlier in the year.

It had also been planned to make Cap presentations to Robbie Dunn and Robbie Zabica, but business commitments prevented them from attending. It's hoped to honour the two former Socceroos at a later date.

•The Hall of Fame Committee also made presentations to members of the 1975-76 Marah Halim Cup-winning squads and to Con Purser, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of him being involved in the Australia squad for the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

HAPPY DUO: David Jones receives his Cap from Peter Friend

FRIEND-LY LETTER

The following is a letter, dated November 20, sent by Peter Friend, the Chief of Staff of Football Federation Australia, to Hall of Fame chairman Louis Prospero:

Dear Louis,

Please pass my appreciation on to all on the Hall of Fame Committee for the hospitality shown me last Friday night. I thought the dinner was successful and, from all appearances, everyone else did as well.

The Committee should be very proud of what has been achieved over the past 10 years and have every reason to expect things should continue onwards and upwards in the coming years.

For my part, I am very grateful to have been involved in the celebration of the first decade of achievement.

Once again, thank you. Kind regards,

Peter Friend.

THE DAYS WHEN YOU PAID TO PLAY

It wasn't always the case that footballers earned mega money — in fact most of WA's State League players used to pay their clubs for the privilege of turning out each week.

One such player was Frank Reid, ***(pictured)*** a tough-as-teak half-back who starred with the Caledonians and Perth City sides that dominated the trophy scene for a spell after the Second World War.

"I didn't have a car in those days, so it cost me my bus fare to the ground and back each weekend and then we had to throw money in at the end of each game to cover the cost of getting the strips cleaned," recalled Frank.

"The only thing that the clubs gave you was a shirt — you had to buy your own shorts and boots. I remember going to one game at the Esplanade to watch Perth City in action, but they were a man short and I was called on to play. I hadn't brought my boots, so I had to play in my good shoes — and ruined them."

Frank continued playing until he was well into his 40's.

He was born in Saltcoats in Scotland in 1923 — but turned out as a young player for a club in neighbouring Kilwinning, where his father sold fish from the back of a cart.

He joined the Navy at the age of 18, trained as a radar operator and saw plenty of action when his ship engaged the Japanese in combat in South-East Asia.

His ship regularly called at Fremantle and he got to know a local lass, Marie, who became his wife when Frank returned to Australia in 1948.

Frank initially played for Fremantle City, but later joined Caledonians and was a key figure in the team that made a clean sweep of trophies in 1949, winning the League title, the Challenge Cup, and Charity Cup and also the Collie Carnival.

Frank got eight league goals that season playing as an inside forward, but most of his games were as a right half-back.

He turned out many times for the State and was full of admiration for WA's captain-coach, Alex Mansfield, and centre forward Jack Smethurst. He said: "Alex was the best header of the ball I'd seen and Jack was a terrific player. He could've made it in Britain. He was so strong and would've run through a brick wall for the team."

Now 83, Frank has been nominated by his son Steve for consideration as an inductee into the Hall of Fame. The next induction intake is expected to be in mid-2008.

The Committee reserves the right to have the final say on all nominations, but please contact us if you know someone who has the appropriate credentials to be a nominee.

Hall of Fame Committee contacts:
Chairman: Louis Prospero (0413 041942);
Treasurer: Bob Brown (9446 3338); Secretary: Barbara Gibson (9526 0330).
The Fame Game Editor: Mel Moffat (9339 8619).

BEATING THE POMS AT THE WORLD GAME

Cricket took a back seat when a WA Media/Hall of Fame team tackled the visiting English Ashes Media in a football challenge match at Members Equity Stadium in December.

And current dominance over the Poms, irrespective of the sport, was maintained when the local side won 6-4.

The contest preserved meetings between WA and teams associated with visiting English cricket sides which go back to 1902.

In those days it was the full State team that took on the English cricketers, who were more than adept with a football at their feet and triumphed 4-0 in that historic initial first meeting. They also won in 1904 and 1908.

This time round, however — with the cricketers focused on their task against Australia in the Ashes Test at the WACA Ground — it was members of the English media who represented the "Old Dart".

The WA side included a couple of former Socceroos stars in Robbie Dunn and Robbie Zabica, who both do part-time work in local media.

The game was refereed by former World Cup whistler Eddie Lennie — and the teams later shared a few beers round the barbecue.

The Hall of Fame Committee is grateful to BGC, South African Airlines and Members Equity Bank for their support in staging the event.

The teams:

WA Media/Hall of Fame: Ashley Morrison (990 Info Radio), Bob Figg (Freelance), Tom Niedrich (6EBA), Mark Kaplin (6EBA), Louis Prospero (HoF), Eric Williams (HoF), Richard Kreider (ABSW), Tony Carvajal (World Football), Paul Kelly (Members Equity), Julian Burt (HoF), Robbie Zabica (990), Calum O'Connell (990), John O'Connell (990), Robbie Dunn (90.5FM), Jonathan Cook (West Australian), Eamon Duffy (6EBA).

English Media: Andy Walpole (English Cricket Board), Chris Roy (Daily Mail), Tom Shaw (Getty Images), Tim Abraham (Sky Sport), Alex Thomas (Sky News), Philip Brown (photographer), Mark Scott (Capital Radio), Dean Wilson (Daily Mirror), Huw Slipper (ECB), Steve Wyeth (BBC), Simon Briggs (Daily Telegraph), John Etheridge (The Sun), Mike Dickson (Daily Mail).

LOCAL HEROES: The WA team line-up

•NICE TO SEE YOU: Well done to former State team stars George McMillan and Dave O'Callaghan who came from the Eastern States to join in the reunion of the 1975-76 Marah Halim Cup-winning squads at the Anniversary Dinner on November 17.

•SAD LOSS: Sports writer David Marsh, who reported on Perth Glory games and the local football scene, died in December. He was 57.

•GET WELL: Our best wishes go to Hall of Champions inductee Bert Robertson, 89, who suffered a stroke in November.

HOT ROO

Everyone knows that Wayne Rooney is hot property — and that fact was underlined at the Auction which was held at the Anniversary Dinner in November.

A superbly-framed autographed action photo of Rooney was the red-hot item at the Auction, attracting some spirited bidding before it was sold for $700.

A replica World Cup trophy was also much in demand, fetching $500, while a framed pic of the WA State squad that won the Marah Halim Cup in 1976 was sold for $500.

A Real Madrid shirt signed by Zinedine Zidane was another prized item.

Our thanks must go to auctioneer Ron More, who battled on bravely despite numerous problems with an unco-operative microphone.

Ron has just started a new business as a financial advisor. We wish him well.

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The Golden Oldies

In this issue we spotlight Alex Mansfield, who captained and coached the WA State team to many triumphs in the 1940's and 1950's and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2005.

Alex Mansfield, at the age of 86 and with a pacemaker recently fitted, is not as mobile as he used to be — but he is still a football fanatic...and a lively vocal contributor to the game.

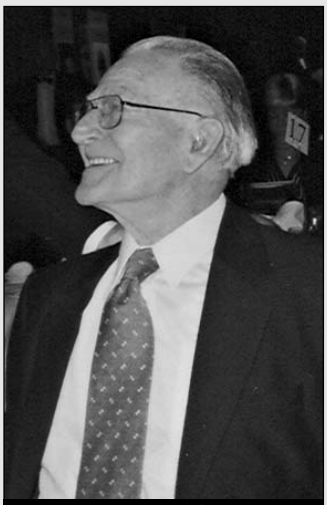
"I'm a great lounge room coach — I sit in front of the TV and shout my advice," he laughed when we caught up with him in his Bicton home.

"I watch several games each week and loved Australia's effort in the World Cup. A pity about that game against Italy."

Alex was born in Essex in England on June 4, 1920, although his father — grandly named George Robert Albert Campbell Mansfield — was originally from Campbelltown on the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland.

"Dad was a very good full back and played for Morton, so I got my passion for the game from him," said Alex.

Both father and son served during the Second World War — Alex in the Navy and his dad as an experimental munitions expert.



Alex Mansfield

"Dad was world-renowned for his ability to solve problems with all sort of armaments, instruments, guns and ammunition," said Alex. "He received the British Empire Medal for his work during the War."

Alex, who had played for Essex County, captained the Navy X1 during the War and turned out in games in England — against Millwall and Newcastle — and all over the world, including the US and Australia.

He was given trials by Millwall and Southend and offered terms by both clubs, but decided to emigrate to WA in 1946.

He got a job in insurance — he was later a civil servant — joined up with the North Perth club and, with his keen eye from a pivotal position in defence, became an influential player and turned out many times for the State. He was also player-coach of Perth City and Azzurri.

His most significant triumph was skippering WA to victory in the 1948 Southern States Carnival in Adelaide.

"The papers of the day lauded us as the best team to ever win the Carnival," he said.

"We had a wonderful side. The ball-playing and passing was perfect. One of the opposing sides tried to upset our rhythm with some tough tackles, but we were far too good for them."

WA beat South Australia 4-2 in the first game, overcame Tasmania 3-2 in the next contest of the three-team event — and then smashed the Tasmanians 6-2 when they met again the final.

Alan Beale was the top scorer in the tournament with six goals.

"Alan was a great goalscorer and a fine player, but I thought that Jack Smethurst was the best centre forward of that era. He was what I would call a bustling front-runner. He was very hard to shift off the ball," said Alex.

For the record, the squad that won that 1948 event was:

Ron Oswald (Balmoral)
Bob Cherry (Shenton Park)
Alan Miller (North Perth)
Frank McShane (Victoria Park)
Alex Mansfield (North Perth, capt)
Stewart Johnson (South Perth)
Jack Smethurst (Perth City)
Ron Robertson (Fremantle City)
Alan Beale (Spearwood)
Bert Robertson (North Perth)
Don Turner (South Perth)
George Allison (Perth City)
Bill Brackenridge (Caledonians)
Don Hunter (South Belmont)

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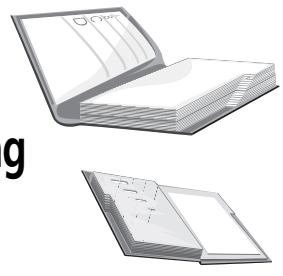

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